UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1994/206
22 February 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 21 FEBRUARY 1994 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the texts of a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic and a note verbale by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia regarding the shooting of 23 Azerbaijani prisoners and hostages in the prisoners' camp located near the city of Spitak, Republic of Armenia, on 15 February 1994 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yashar T. ALIYEV
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex

[Original: Russian]

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE AZERBAIJANI REPUBLIC

On 15 February 1994, at the prisoner-of-war camp near the town of Spitak (Republic of Armenia), which houses about 300 prisoners and hostages, 23 Azerbaijani prisoners were shot.

On 16 February 1994 the press service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia officially acknowledged the shooting of only eight Azerbaijani prisoners, noting that "they were killed while attempting to escape". The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia also stated that "in accordance with the Geneva Conventions, the military police of the Ministry of Defence are conducting an investigation, and the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Erevan has been notified of the incident".

The international community long ago condemned the criminal practice of establishing concentration camps, and this is reflected in the 1949 Geneva Conventions for the protection of war victims, which forbid inhuman treatment of prisoners of war. Quite obviously, the crime that is being committed is not only a flagrant violation of those Conventions, but also a shameless challenge to the universally accepted norms of international law and human morality.

The shooting of the Azerbaijani prisoners took place after Azerbaijan had expressed its readiness to conduct a full exchange of all hostages and prisoners without any preconditions. In this connection it should be recalled that, starting in August 1993, the Azerbaijani authorities have unilaterally released more than 100 Armenian prisoners of war, and in connection with Azerbaijan's accession to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the Azerbaijani Republic declared that it condemns the taking of hostages in the course of military action, on whatever side it occurs. The Azerbaijani authorities have more than once unsuccessfully called on the competent agencies in Armenia to take similar action with regard to the Azerbaijanis taken prisoner or hostage.

This massacre of defenceless war victims once again proves the manifest truth - the undisputed participation of the Republic of Armenia in a war against Azerbaijan, otherwise why are there in Armenia's territory, and particularly in the neighbourhood of the towns of Gyumri, Spitak, Echmiadzin and Gugark, concentration camps containing more than 3,500 people, the vast majority of whom are civilians - children, women and elderly people.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic expresses its indignation at the inhuman action of the Armenian authorities, emphasizes its barbaric nature and appeals to the world community, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international humanitarian organizations to investigate all the circumstances of this crime.

Baku, 18 February 1994

NOTE VERBALE FROM THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE AZERBAIJANI REPUBLIC TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE ARMENIAN REPUBLIC

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic deems it necessary to inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Armenian Republic of the following:

On 15 February 1994, at the prisoner-of-war camp near the town of Spitak (Republic of Armenia), which houses about 300 prisoners and hostages, 23 Azerbaijani prisoners were shot.

On 16 February 1994 the press service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia officially acknowledged the shooting of only eight Azerbaijani prisoners, noting that "they were killed while attempting to escape". The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia also stated that "in accordance with the Geneva Conventions, the military police of the Ministry of Defence are conducting an investigation, and the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Erevan has been notified of the incident".

In this connection, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic states that regardless of the result of the investigation, the crime which has been committed is a flagrant violation of the 1994 Geneva Conventions for the protection of war victims, which prohibit inhuman treatment of prisoners of war. This crime is a shameless challenge to the universally accepted norms of international law and human morality.

The international community long ago condemned the criminal practice of establishing concentration camps, and this is reflected in the above-mentioned Geneva Conventions to which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia refers.

This massacre of defenceless war victims yet again proves the manifest truth - the undisputed participation of the Republic of Armenia in a war against Azerbaijan, otherwise there would not be in Armenia's territory, and specifically in the neighbourhood of the towns of Gyumri, Spitak, Echmiadzin and Gugark, concentration camps containing more than 3,500 people, most of them civilians - women, children and elderly people.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic emphasizes that the shooting of the Azerbaijani prisoners took place after Azerbaijan had more than once expressed its readiness to conduct a full exchange of all hostages and prisoners of war without any preconditions. Starting in August 1993, the Azerbaijani authorities have unilaterally released more than 100 Armenian prisoners of war. In connection with the signing by Azerbaijan of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the Azerbaijani Republic stated that it condemns the taking of hostages in the course of military action, in any form and on whatever side it occurs. The Azerbaijani authorities have more than once unsuccessfully called on the competent agencies in Armenia to take similar action with regard to the Azerbaijanis taken prisoner or hostage.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic expresses to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Armenian Republic a strong protest against the inhuman and barbaric action of the Armenian authorities in shooting Azerbaijani prisoners, and calls for an immediate and careful investigation of the circumstances of the crime that has been committed and for the severe punishment of those responsible.

Baku, 18 February 1994